

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Propertyhistoric name Elmwood

other names/site number _____

2. Locationstreet & number State Road 1425☒ not for publicationcity, town Lewis☒ vicinitystate North Carolinacode NCcounty Granvillecode 077zip code 27565**3. Classification**

Ownership of Property

☒ private☐ public-local☐ public-State☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

☐ building(s)☒ district☐ site☐ structure☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1112

Noncontributing

1

buildings

sites

structures

objects

1

Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

Historic and Architectural Resources of GranvilleCounty, North CarolinaNumber of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 0**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this
☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

2-1-88

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.☐ See continuation sheet.☐ determined eligible for the National
Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.☐ removed from the National Register.☐ other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic-single dwellingAgriculture/Subsistence

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Georgian

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stonewalls weatherboard

roof metalother woodbrick

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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Section number 7 Page 1 DESCRIPTION

Elmwood is the finest plantation era, Georgian style dwelling in Granville County and one of the most complete rural expressions of the style in North Carolina. Substantially proportioned and exceptionally finished, it stands a gracious distance from the road, overlooking cultivated fields, a large farm pond and a non-contributing, metal-sheathed, former tenant house. Although vacant, it is structurally sound and retains a significant proportion of its original finish, both inside and out.

Two stories tall and a rare two rooms deep, the former plantation seat is one of the largest surviving early dwellings in the county. Constructed of timbers mortised, tenoned and pegged together, it is raised on a stone foundation and sheathed in beaded weatherboards. Its flush gable ends are flanked by wide, shallow, double-shouldered chimneys built of brick laid in Flemish bond which are among the finest in the county. Elaborately molded sills support its asymmetrically placed, nine-over-nine and upper six-over-six windows, many of which are protectively covered with sheet metal, as is the roof. Modillion blocks, a rare local motif, stretch across the eaves of its north and south-facing elevations. Its present front (probably once originally the rear) elevation, shaded by a later added, square columned porch, faces north towards the pond.

The true glory of the dwelling, however, is its interior, which is fully and finely paneled, and neatly sheathed with flush boards. Perhaps conceptualized as an extended version of the traditional hall-parlor plan, the dwelling has a large parlor and an adjacent smaller room stretched across its north elevation downstairs. Two rooms, divided by a central hallway, stand in a second flank to their rear. The corner mantels and overmantels of each of these four rooms, as well as their eight-panel doors and wainscoting, are adorned with handsome, raised panels. The parlor mantel, which was removed for protection in the 1970s, was the most ornate. Decorated with crossettes, a Greek key pattern and a heavily molded architrave, it is virtually identical to the mantel of the Patty Person Taylor House in adjacent Franklin County, a dwelling raised prior to 1800 that is listed on the National Register. The other mantels and overmantels, though less ornate, feature a varied pattern of raised panels and are finer expressions of the Georgian style than any others in the county. The only notable alterations to the downstairs, other than the removal of the parlor mantel, were the lifting of a few

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doors off of their hinges and the apparent late nineteenth century sheathing of the parlor with narrow, beaded boards.

The hallway downstairs has flat rather than raised-panel wainscoting and an exceptional Chinese Chippendale style stair, unique in the county. The hallway and the five unaltered rooms upstairs - an additional small room stands at the head of the stairs above the parlor - are also finished with flat-paneled wainscoting. The upstairs doors, reduced to six panels each, are finished with raised panels, however, as are the mantels and overmantels of the corner hearths. The substantial attic stretched beneath the gable roof was once divided into two rooms. Pegs hold the common rafters together at the ridge and knee braces provide further support to their long spans.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Agriculture

Period of Significance

1805 -1865

Significant Dates

1805

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Ragsdale, H. (brickmason)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

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Section number 8 Page 1 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Elmwood is significant locally, as the finest Georgian style property surviving from Granville County's plantation era, and also statewide, as one of the most complete and intact expressions of the style in North Carolina. Its unique Chinese Chippendale stair and its use of raised panels at doors, mantels, overmantels and wainscoting, coupled with its fine Flemish bond chimneys and modillion block cornice, define the Georgian style in the county and match the finer rural examples of the style in the state. (See associated Property Type 1 - Georgian and Federal Style Dwellings) The stylish nature of the house's neatly executed and intact finish, its grandly scaled, two-room deep plan and its pastoral location overlooking a placid pond combine to make Elmwood one of the most significant plantation era buildings in the county. Built for the wealthy and influential Lewis family, and owned during the antebellum years by one of the county's greatest landowners, William O. Gregory, it is also significant as a representative of the way of life and style of living of the county's wealthiest plantation era citizens. (See associated Historic Context 1 - The Plantation Era in Granville County, 1746-1865) The property's period of significance does not extend beyond 1865, the end of the plantation era, because the outbuildings adjacent to the nominated acreage are ruinous, greatly altered or of recent vintage. Within the bounds of the nomination is an altered, metal sided, non-contributing, former tenant house.

The former plantation seat was built for the Lewis family in 1805. The date is scribed into the bases of both of the chimneys, along with the name H. Ragsdale, who was apparently the brickmason. Local historians have attributed its construction to Howell Lewis but, because he was born in 1731 and would therefore have been quite old by the time the house was erected, its most likely builder was his son, Willis. Howell Lewis had come to the county from Goochland County, Virginia, as early as 1756 and remained until his death in 1814. In the interim he became a prominent local political figure, serving in the state legislature as a senator in 1785 and 1786. In 1797 he deeded 400 acres of land to his son, Willis, including the tract upon which he (Howell) lived, a dwelling house and outbuildings [Deed Book P, Page 367].

Like his father, Willis Lewis was a prominent local figure. A captain in the infantry during the Revolutionary War, he served as a state senator in 1816 and 1817 and a representative to the

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legislature in 1826. His fortunes were to tumble in subsequent years, however. In 1828, \$30,000 in debt, he transferred Elmwood to Nathaniel Robards [Deed Book 3, Page 475]. In addition to the house, Robards also received a 5,000 acre tract of land; 58 slaves; 150 to 200 cattle; 250 sheep; 400 hogs; and all crops, plantation tools and household furniture. The dwelling was indeed located on an estate equal to its refined and substantial appearance.

In 1831, for the sum of \$6,500, Robards sold the plantation seat and 3,500 acres of land to William O. Gregory (1804-1886), a Mecklenburg County, Virginia, emigre' [Deed Book 5, Page 97]. Part of the continuing influx of wealthy Virginians to Granville County throughout much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Gregory was to become one of the county's greatest landowners. On the eve of the Civil War, according to the 1860 federal census, he owned 26 slaves housed in five dwellings, had a personal estate valued at \$38,000 and, most significantly, possessed real estate valued at the tremendous sum of \$52,000. Unlike his brothers who traveled to Granville County after him and built such stylish Greek Revival style dwellings as Hill Airy - which is listed on the National Register - he apparently found the grand, if slightly antiquated, Georgian style Elmwood suitable to his high station. Bequeathed by him to his nephews following his death in 1886 [Will Book 23, Page 564], the house remained in the family, with a short break, until 1938. It was acquired in that year by William Lee Keller, in whose family it remains [Deed Book 102, Page 306]. Maintained but unoccupied, the house is no longer the center of a large tobacco farm, though some of its surrounding acreage is cultivated every year.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

☒ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approximately 8 acres

UTM References

A

Zone	Easting	Northing
------	---------	----------

C

Zone	Easting	Northing
------	---------	----------

B

Zone	Easting	Northing
------	---------	----------

D

Zone	Easting	Northing
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☒ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

☒ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marvin A. Brown/Architectural Historian & Patricia Esperon/Historian

organization Granville County-Oxford Historic Survey date 8/17/87

street & number P.O. Box 1556(State Historic Pres. Office) telephone 919-693-1491

city or town Oxford state N.C. zip code 27565

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Granville County Deeds. Granville County Courthouse. Oxford, N.C.

Granville County Wills. Granville County Courthouse. Oxford, N.C.

Hays, Francis B. Unpublished collection of 135 scrapbooks on Granville County history located at Richard H. Thornton Public Library, Oxford, N.C.

Sorley, Merrow Egerton, Lewis of Warner Hall. Columbia: E.W. Stephen and Co., 1937.

Spicer, J.E., "Howell Lewis at Elmwood and the Trading Path." Typed manuscript located at Richard H. Thornton Library, Oxford, N.C.

United States Manuscript Censuses. Microfilm located at Richard H. Thornton Library, Oxford, N.C.

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Continuation SheetSection number 10 Page 1 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM REFERENCES

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	17	713460	4031280
B	17	713490	4031500
C	17	713370	4031500
D	17	713300	4031400
E	17	713290	4031300

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at point A: 17 713460 4031280 on the USGS polygon where the eastern edge of the farm lane intersects the northern edge of the dirt road, continuing north approximately 675 feet, along the eastern edge of the farm lane, to point B: 17 713490 4031500 on the polygon, where the eastern edge of the farm lane meets the tree line. Continuing in a straight line due west approximately 350 feet, along the edge of the woods and northern edge of the farm pond, to point C: 17 713370 4031500 on the polygon, at the western edge of the farm pond. Continuing along the western edge of the farm pond approximately 350 feet as it curves southwest, to point D: 17 713300 4031400 at the southwest corner of the farm pond. Continuing in a straight line south approximately 325 feet to the west of the former tenant house, to point E: 17 713290 4031300 on the polygon at the northern edge of the dirt road. Continuing southeast approximately 525 feet, along the northern side of the dirt road, to the point of origin.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The majority of the tract of land has reverted to woodland. The small amount of farm land which is still in cultivation is farmed by tenant farmers. Because a large portion of the acreage of the property has substantially changed so that it no longer contributes to the historic integrity or historic significance of

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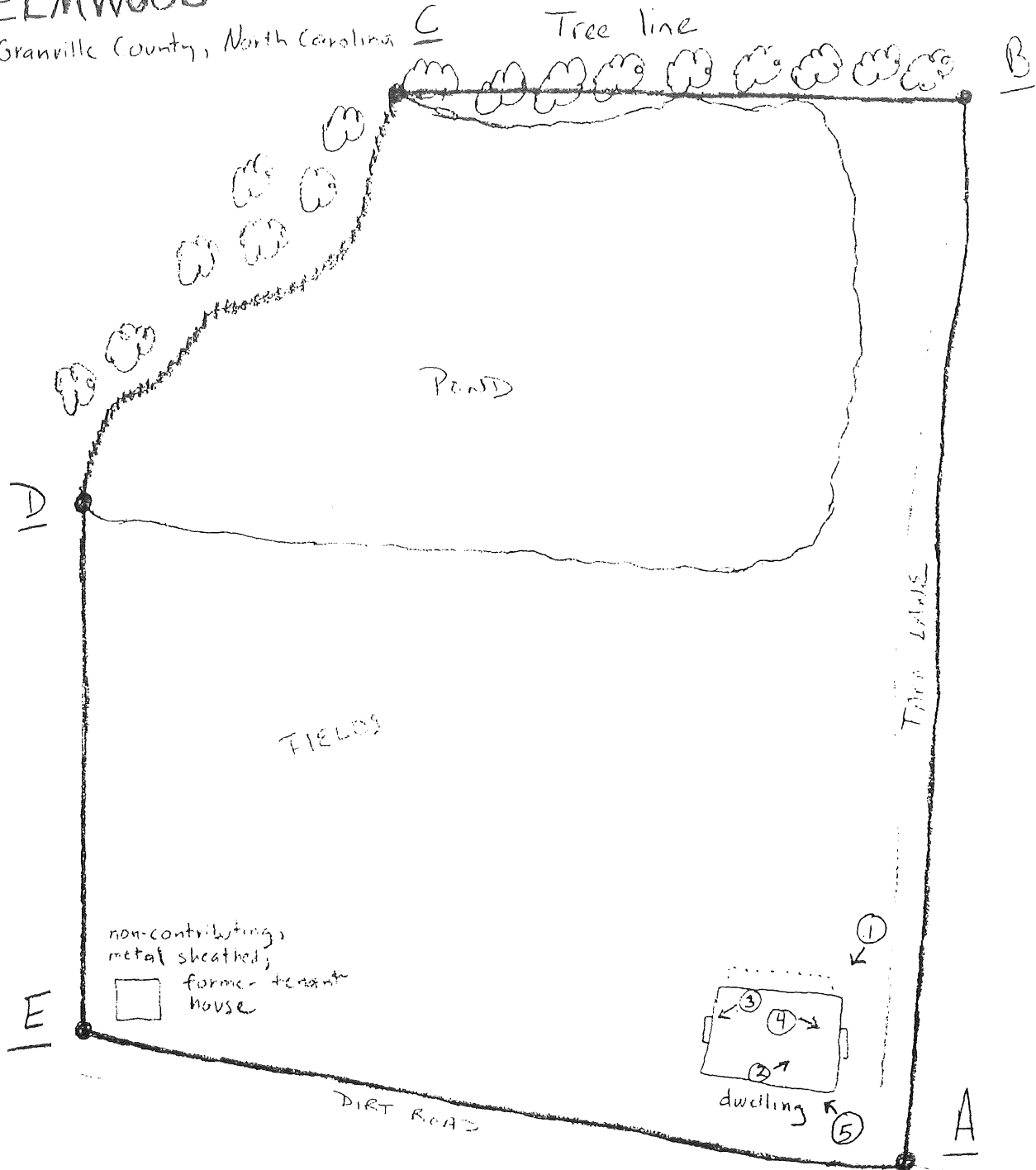
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the property it is not included in the nomination. Several outbuildings that are either deteriorated or have been built within the last fifty years that lie in the vicinity of the house are also excluded from the nomination. Therefore approximately 8 acres immediately around the house that maintain their integrity and convey the property's historic setting - including the dwelling, farm pond, and a non-contributing tenant house that lies in the field immediately surrounding the house - have been nominated.

The eastern boundary from UTM points A to B includes the farm clearing and the house to its west and excludes several tobacco barns built within the last fifty years to its east. The northern boundary from UTM points C to D includes the farm clearing and farm pond to its south and to excludes woodland to its north. The western boundary from UTM points C to D and D to E includes the field and farm pond to its east and excludes woodland and farm land used by tenants to the west. The southern boundary from UTM points E to A includes the farm clearing and dwelling house to its north and excludes a severely deteriorated barn, corn crib, and strip house to its south.

ELMWOOD

Granville County, North Carolina



Underlined capital letters represent the UTM references for the vertices of the polygon drawn to encompass the property on the accompanying USGS map.

Approx 8 acres

Approx 1" = 100'

drawn by Patricia Esperson, March, 1987

Elmwood

Lewis vicinity
Granville County, NC

Quad: Howell, NC

Scale: 1:24,000

Zone: 17

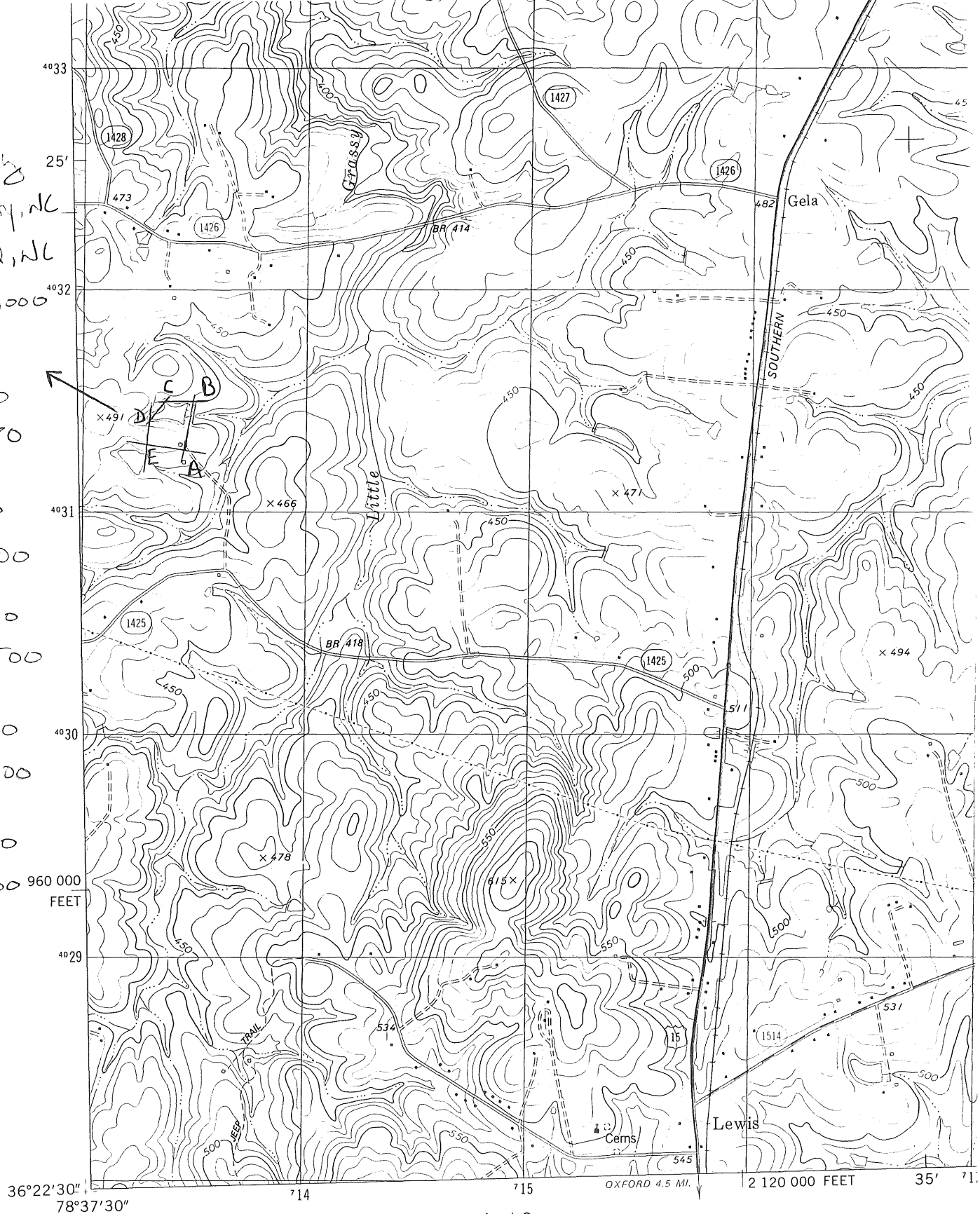
A: 713460
4031280

B: 713490
4031500

C: 713370
4031500

D: 713300
4031400

E: 713290
4031300



(BEREA)
5256 1 SW

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1977. Field checked 1977. Map edited 1981

Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: North Carolina coordinate
system (Lambert conformal conic)

1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 17

1927 North American Datum

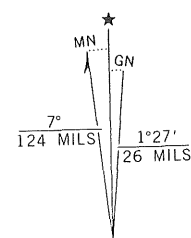
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983

move the projection lines 12 meters south and

24 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks

Areas covered by dashed light-blue pattern

indicate controlled inundation



UTM GRID AND 1981 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

